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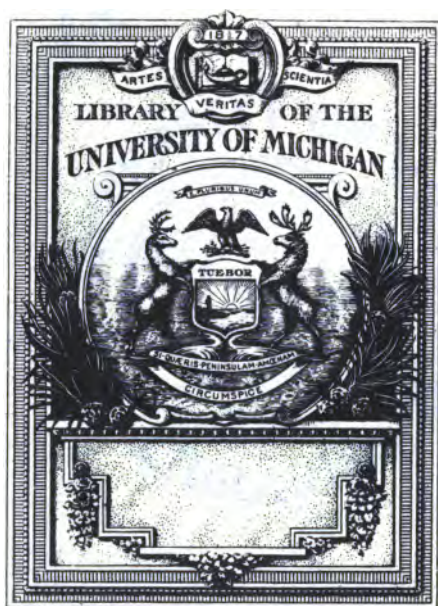
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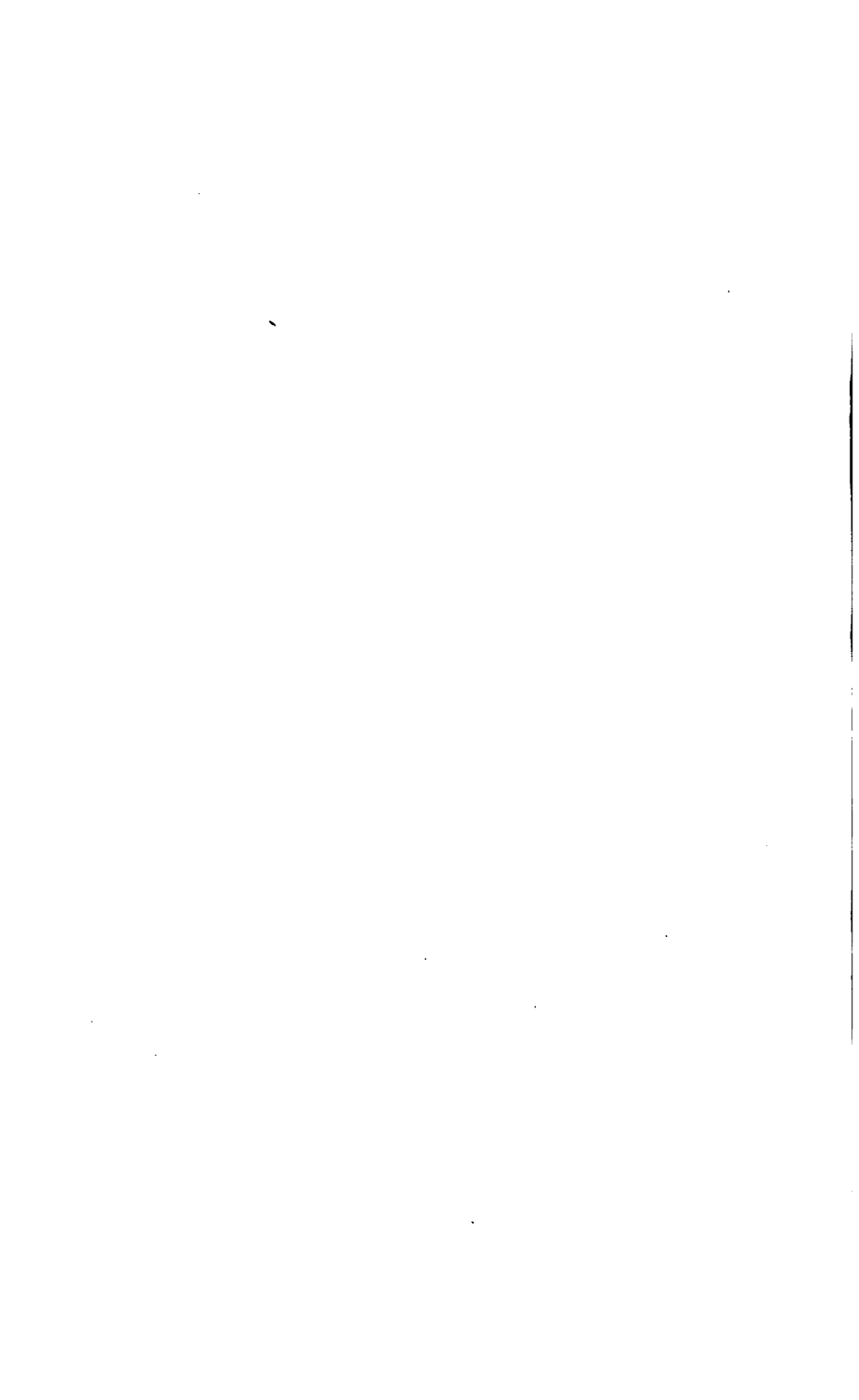
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CRÈÛSA,
Queen of ATHENS.
A
TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the
Theatre Royal in *Drury-lane*
By His MAJESTY's Servants.

WRITTEN BY
Mr. WILLIAM WHITEHEAD.



L O N D O N ;

Printed for R. and J. DODSLEY in *Pall-mall*;
And Sold by M. COOPER, in *Peter-noster-Row*, 1754.

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TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

GEORGE BUSSY,

Lord Visc. VILLIERS,

The following TRAGEDY is
inscribed by

His Lordship's

Most obliged

and most affectionate

humble Servant,

W. WHITEHEAD.

1910

1911

1912

1913

1914

1915

1916

1917

1918

1919

1920

Advertisement.

THE Subject of the following Scenes is so ancient, so slightly mentioned by Historians, and so fabulously treated by *Euripides* in his Tragedy of *Ion*, that the Author thought himself at liberty to make the Story his own. Some glaring Circumstances he was obliged to adhere to, which he has endeavoured to render probable.

[illegible][illegible]

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. ROSS.

PROLOGUES of old, the Learn'd in Language say,
Were merely Introductions to the Play,
Spoken by Gods, or Ghosts, or Men who knew
Whate'er was previous to the Scenes in view;
And complaisantly came to lay before ye
The several Heads, and Windings of the Story.

But modern Times and British Rules are such,
Our Bards beforehand must not tell too much;
Nor dare we, like the neighb'ring French, admit
Ev'n Confidantes, who might instruct the Pit,
By asking Questions of the leading Few,
And hearing Secrets, which before they knew.

Yet what we can to help this antique Piece
We will attempt.—Our Scene to-night is Greece.
And, by the Magic of the Poet's Rod,
This Stage the Temple of the Delphic God!
Where Kings, and Chiefs, and Sages came of old,
Like modern Fools, to have their Fortunes told;
And Monarchs were enthron'd, or Nations freed,
As an old Priest, or wither'd Maid decreed.
Yet think not all were equally deceiv'd,
Some knew, more doubted, many more believ'd.
In short, these Oracles, and witching Rhimes
Were but the pious Frauds of ancient Times;
Wisely contriv'd to keep Mankind in awe,
When Faith was Wonder, and Religion Law!

Thus much premis'd, to every feeling Breast
We leave the Scenes themselves to tell the rest.

—Yet something sure was to the Critics said,
Which I forget,—some Invocation made!

Ye Critic Bands, like jealous Guardians, plac'd
To watch th' Encroachments on the Realms of Taste,
From you our Author would two Boons obtain,
Not wholly diffident, nor wholly vain:
Two things he asks; 'tis modest sure, from you
Who can do all things, to request but two:
First to his Scenes a kind Attention pay,
Then judge!—with Candor judge—and we obey.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

XUTHUS, King of *Athens*, Mr. BERRY.
ILYSSUS, an unknown Youth, At- } Miss MACKLIN.
tendant on the Temple at *Delphi*, }
ALETES, a *Grecian Sage*, Mr. GARRICK.
PHORBAS, an old *Athenian*, Mr. MOSSOP.
Priests of *Apollo*.
Citizens of *Athens*,

CRÉÜSA, Queen of *Athens*, Mrs. PRITCHARD.
PYTHIA, Priestess of *Apollo*, Miss HAUGHTON.
LYCEA, and other Women at- } Mrs. COWPER, &c.
tending on the Queen, }
Virgins belonging to the Temple.
Guards, &c.

Scene, the Vestibule of the Temple of *Apollo* at *Delphi*, and the Laurel Grove adjoining.



C R È Û S A,
Queen of ATHENS.

A
T R A G E D Y.

A C T I.

The Vestibule of the Temple.

ILYSSUS and Virgins.

ILYSSUS.

HASTE, haste, ye Virgins; round the Columns twine
Your flowery Chaplets; and with Streams fresh-drawn
Of *Castaly*, bedew the sacred Porch
Of the great God of Day. Already see
His orient Beam has reach'd the double Top
Of high *Parnassus*, and begins to shed
A gleamy Lustre o'er the Laurel Grove!
Haste, haste, ye Virgins. From the Vale beneath
I hear the Noise of Chariots, and of Steeds
Which hither bend their Course, for every Sound
Seems nearer than the former.—And behold

2 C R E - U - S A,

A reverend Stranger, who perhaps proclaims
Th' Approach of some great Monarch, to consult
All-seeing *Phœbus*, or implore his Aid.
Haste, haste, ye Virgins !

Enter PHORBAS.

PHORBAS.

Tell me, gentle Maids,
And thou, fair Youth, who seem'st to lead the Train,
Is this the Temple of the *Delphic* God ?

ILYSSUS.

It is ; and on the middle Point of Earth
Its firm Foundations by immortal Hands
Stand fix'd : — but break we off ; the folded Gates
Unbar, and lo ! the Priestess self appears !

[*The Pythia speaks as she descends from the Temple*

PYTHIA.

Hence, ye profane ! nor with unhallow'd Step
Pollute the Threshold of the *Delian* King
Who slew the *Python* ! — Say, from whence, thou art,
And what thy Business, Stranger.

PHORBAS.

Sacred Maid !

From *Athens* am I come, the Harbinger
Of great *Creusa*, mine and *Athens'* Queen

PYTHIA.

Comes she on pious Purpose, to adore
The mystic Shrine oracular ?

PHORBAS.

She does ;

And with her comes the Partner of her Bed,
Eolian Xuthus : he whose powerful Arm
Sav'd *Athens* from her Fate, and in return
From good *Erechtheus'* bounteous Hand receiv'd

His

A TRAGEDY.

His Daughter and his Crown.—† Would he had found
Some other Recompence! [† *Half aside.*

PYTHIA. [*Overhearing him.*

Would he had found?

Old Age is talkative, and I may learn
Somewhat of moment from him.—Wherefore come they?
Does Famine threaten, or wide-wasting Plague
Infest the Land?

PHORBAS.

Thank Heaven, our crouded Streets
Have felt no dire Disease; and Plenty still
Laughs in our blooming Fields. Alas! I fear
The childless Goddess who presides o'er *Athens*
Has found a surer Method to declare
How ill she brooks that any Stranger Hand
Should wield th' *Athenian* Scepter.

PYTHIA.

Does from her

The Vengeance come?

PHORBAS

I know not whence it comes,
But this I know, full fifteen Years have roll'd
Since first their Hands were join'd, and roll'd in vain;
For still the Royal Pair in Silence mourn,
Curs'd with a barren Bed. For this they come,
T' explore the latent Cause, and beg of Heav'n
To grant an Heir, or teach them where to fix,
On what selected Head, th' *Athenian* Crown.

PYTHIA.

And Heaven, no doubt, will hear and grant their Prayer.
Ilyssus, haste, and bid the Priests prepare
For Sacrifice. You, *Nysa*, and your Sisters,
Amid the Laurel Grove with Speed perform

C R E U S A,

The Morning's due Lustration.

Then hither all return.—Myself, mean while
Will tempt the Vice of Age, and try to draw
Some useful Secrets from him. } *Aside,*

The good King
Of whom you spake, *Erectheus*, did his People
Esteem and love him as they ought? for Fame
Talk'd largely of his Worth. He was a King——

PHORBAS.

He was my good old Master, such a King.
As Heaven but rarely sends. Did we esteem
And love him, dost thou ask? O, we ador'd him,
He was our Father, not our King.—These Tears
At least may speak *my* Heart.—We must not hope
In these degenerate Times to see him equal'd.
He never did an unkind Act, but once,
And then he thought the public Good requir'd it;
'Tho' much I fear the Evils we lament
From thence derive their Origin.

PYTHIA.

What Act?

What unkind Act?

PHORBAS.

O Maid, 'twere long to tell
The whole unhappy Story, yet in part
Hear what to me appears too closely join'd
With these our present Ills. There was a Youth
Athenian born, but not of Royal Blood,
His Name *Nicander*; him unlucky Fate
Had made the Lover of our present Queen
While yet a Maid. What will not Love attempt
In young ambitious Minds? he told his Pain,
And won the Fair in secret to admit,

And

A T R A G E D Y

And to return his Passion. The good King
 Was for a Time deceiv'd, but found at last
 Th' audacious Fraud, and drove the guilty Youth
 To Banishment perpetual. Some say
 'Twas by his Means he fell, tho' that my Heart
 Consents not to believe. Thus much is sure,
Nicander wander'd forth a wretched Exile,
 And ere few Days had past, upon the Road
 Were found his well-known Garments stain'd with Blood.
 Sure Sign of Murder, and as sure a Sign
 No needy Robber was the Instrument.

PYTHIA.

How bore *Creusa* this?

PHORBAS.

At first her Sorrows
 Were loud and frantic. Time at length subdued
 Her Rage to silent Grief. The good old King,
 To sooth her Woes, consented she should raise
 A Tomb to her *Nicander*; and perform
 A Kind of annual Rites to parted Love.

PYTHIA.

But that not long continued, for we find
 She married *Xuthus*.

PHORBAS.

'Twas a Match of State,
 He sav'd her Country, and she gave her Hand
 Because that Country ask'd it. But her Heart
 Is buried with *Nicander*. Still to him,
 And *Xuthus*' self permits it, she performs
 Her yearly Off'rings, and adorns with Flowers
 An empty Tomb.—Would he had liv'd, and reign'd
 Her wedded Lord! we had not wanted then
 Th' Assistance of a Stranger Arm to guard

Th'

C R E U S A,

Th' *Athenian* State, nor had we then been driven
To search for Heirs at *Delphi*.

PYTHIA.

Stop thy Tongue,
Or speak with Rev'rence of the sacred Shrine.
—Thy Words were hasty, but thy Silence now
Makes just Atonement for them.—Then perhaps
Thou think'st this want of Heirs a Curse entail'd
By Heaven on *Athens* for *Nicander's* Death
And *Xuthus's* Reign?

PHORBAS.

I am *Athenian* born,
Nor love *Æolian* Kings, however great
And good they may be.

PYTHIA.

The Imperial *Xuthus*
Is much renown'd.

PHORBAS.

Is virtuous, brave, and pious;
Perhaps too pious.

PYTHIA.

How!

PHORBAS.

Forgive me, Maid,
I speak my Thoughts with Freedom.

PYTHIA.

What thou speak'st
To me, is sacred. Then perchance thou rank'st
His Journey hither to address the God
Among those Acts which thou would'st call too pious?

PHORBAS.

For me the Gods of *Athens* would suffice.—

Yea

A . T R A G E D Y.

Yet do I pay just Rev'rence, holy Maid,
To thee, and to thy Shrine.

PYTHIA.

Thy Zeal for *Athena*

Is too intemperate.—But the Train returns
And interrupts our Converse. Say, *Ilyssus*,
Are they prepar'd ?

Enter ILYSSUS and Virgins.

ILYSSUS.

They are, and only wait

Th' approaching Victims.

PYTHIA.

By yon Train, the Queen

Is now on her Arrival. Thou, *Ilyssus*,
Receive her here ; while I, as Custom wills,
Deep in the Temple's Inmost Gloom retire
And wait th' inspiring God.—*Ilyssus*, hear ;
When thou hast paid due Honours to the Queen,
Haste to *Aletes*, in the Laurel Grove
Impatient I expect him ; tell him, Youth,
Things of uncommon Import do demand
His instant Presence.—But the Croud approaches.
Stranger, farewell.—I feel, I feel within
An Heav'n-born Impulse, and the Seeds of Truth
Are lab'ring in my Breast.—Stranger, farewell.

[*The Pythia returns to the Temple, and the Gates shut.*]

Enter CREUSA and Attendants.

CREUSA.

No farther need we Conduct.—Bid the Guards
Return, and wait the King.

PHORBAS.

Does ought of Moment

Detain him on the Road ?

CREUSA!

CREUSA,

CREUSA.

He stops a while

At great *Trophonius*' Cave, that he may leave
No Duty unperform'd. Heaven grant his Zeal
May meet with just Success!

ILYSSUS.

Please you, great Queen,

In yon Pavilion to repose, and taste
Some light Refection.

CREUSA,

Ha!—*Lycea*,—*Phorbas*,

What Youth is this? There's something in his Eyes,
His Shape, his Voice.—What may we call thee, Youth?

ILYSSUS.

The Servant of the God, who guards this Fane.

CREUSA.

Bear'st thou no Name?

ILYSSUS.

Ilyffus, gracious Queen,

The Priests and Virgins call me.

CREUSA.

Ha! *Ilyffus*!

That Name's *Athenian*. Tell me, gentle Youth,
Art thou of *Athens* then?

ILYSSUS.

I have no Country,

Nor know I whence I am.

CREUSA.

Who where thy Parents?

Thy Father, Mother?

ILYSSUS.

Ever honor'd Queen,

I never knew a Mother's tender Cares,

Nor

A T R A G E D Y.

9

Nor heard th' Instructions of a Father's Tongue.

CREUSA.

How cam'st thou hither?

ILYSSUS.

Eighteen Years are past

Since in the Temple's Portal I was found

A sleeping Infant.

CREUSA.

Eighteen Years! good Heaven!

That fatal Time recalls a Scene of Woe—

Let me not think.—Were there no Marks to shew

From whom or whence thou wert?

ILYSSUS.

I have been told

An Oſier Basket ſuch as Shepherds weave,

And a few ſcatter'd Leaves were all the Bed

And Cradle I could boaſt.

CREUSA.

Unhappy Child!

But more, O ten times more unhappy they

Who loſt perhaps in thee their only Offspring;

What Pangs, what Anguiſh muſt the Mother feel,

Compell'd, no doubt, by ſome diſaſtrous Fate,

— But this is all Conjecture.—

ILYSSUS.

O great Queen,

Had thoſe from whom I ſprung been form'd like thee;

Had they e'er felt the ſecret Pangs of Nature,

They had not left me to the deſart World

So totally expos'd. I rather fear

I am the Child of Lowlineſs and Vice,

And happy only in my Ignorance.

C

—Why

—Why should she weep? O if her Tears can fall
For even a Stranger's but suspected Woes,
How is that People blest where she presides
As Mother, and as Queen!—Please you, retire?

CREUSA.

No, stay. Thy Sentiments at least bespeak
A gen'rous Education. Tell me, Youth,
How has thy Mind been form'd?

ILYSSUS.

In that, great Queen,
I never wanted Parents. The good Priests
And pious Priestesses, who with Care sustain'd
My helpless Infancy, left not my Youth
Without Instruction. But O, more than all,
The kindest, best good Man, a neighb'ring Sage
Who has known better Days, tho' now retir'd
To a small Cottage on the Mountain's Brow,
He deals his Blessings to the simple Swains
In Balm and powerful Herbs. He taught me Things
Which my Soul treasures as its dearest Wealth,
And will remember ever. The good Priests,
'Tis true, had taught the same, but not with half
That Force and Energy; Conviction's self
Dwelt on *Aletes*' Tongue.

CREUSA.

Aletes, said'st thou?

Was that the good Man's Name?

ILYSSUS.

It is, great Queen,
For yet he lives, and guides me by his Counsels.

CREUSA.

What did he teach thee?

ILYSSUS.

A TRAGEDY.

II

ILYSSUS.

To adore high Heaven,
And venerate on Earth Heaven's Image, Truth!
To feel for others Woes, and bear my own
With manly Resignation. — Yet I own
Some things he taught me which but ill agree
With my Condition here.

CREUSA.

What things were those?

ILYSSUS.

They were for Exercise, and to confirm
My growing Strength. And yet I often told him
The Exercise he taught resembled much
What I had heard of War. He was himself
A Warrior once.

CREUSA.

And did those Sports delight thee?

ILYSSUS.

Great Queen, I do confess my Soul mix'd with them,
Whene'er I grasp'd the Osier-platted Shield,
Or sent the mimic Javelin to its Mark,
I felt I know not what of Manhood in me.
But then I knew my Duty, and repress'd
The swelling Ardor. 'Tis to Shades, I cried,
The Servant of the Temple must confine
His less ambitious, not less virtuous Cares.

CREUSA.

Did the good Man observe, and blame thy Ardor?

ILYSSUS.

He only smil'd at my too forward Zeal;
Nay seem'd to think such Sports were necessary
To soften what he call'd more rigorous Studies.

C R E U S A.

CREUSA.

— Suppose when I return to *Athens*, Youth,
Thou should'st attend me thither! would'st thou trust
To me thy future Fortunes?

ILYSSUS.

O most gladly!

— But then to leave these Shades where I was nurs'd
The Servant of the God, how might that seem?
And good *Aletes* too, the kind old Man
Of whom I spake? — But wherefore talk I thus,
You only throw these tempting Lures to try
Th' Ambition of my Youth. — Please you, retire.

CREUSA.

Ilyssus, we will find a time to speak
More largely on this Subject, for the present.
Let all withdraw and leave us. Youth, farewell,
I see the Place, and will retire at leisure.
Eycea, *Phorbas*, stay.

ILYSSUS.

[*Aside.*]

How my Heart beats!
She must mean something sure. Tho' good *Aletes*
Has told me polished Courts abound in Falshood.
But I will bear the Priestess's Message to him,
And open all my Doubts. [Exit.]

PHORBAS.

Great Queen, why stand'st thou silent? something seems
To labour in thy Breast.

CREUSA.

Alas! good *Phorbas*,
Didst thou observe that Youth? When first my Eye
Glanc'd on his beauteous Form, methought I saw
The Person of *Nicander*.

PHORBAS.

A TRAGEDY.

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PHORBAS.

Gracious Queen,
Your Heart misleads your Eyes. The Image there
Too deeply fix'd makes every pleasing Object
Bear some Resemblance to itself.

CREUSA.

Lycea,

And yet, tho' thou wast there I well believe
Thy Youth can scarce remember how he look'd,
When from the Fight triumphant he return'd
Grac'd with the victor Laurel; such a Wreath
As now *Ilyffus* wears. Indeed, *Lycea*,
Thy Mother, had she liv'd, had thought as I do.
Nay when he spake the Voice too was *Nicander's*.
I know not what to think, perhaps 'twas Fancy,
Perhaps 'twas something more.

PHORBAS.

Illustrious Queen,

You do abuse your noble Mind, and lend
To mere illusions of the Brain, the Force
And Power to make you wretched. Grant there were
Some slight Resemblance of *Nicander's* Form
In young *Ilyffus*, tho' my Eyes perceive not
Event the most distant Likeness, grant there were,
Yet wherefore should the Sight so nearly touch thee,
Casual Similitude, we know too well
Nicander left no Heir.

[*She seems disturbed.*]

I say not this,

Great Queen, to heighten but relieve your Sorrows,
And banish from your Breast each vain Surmise
Which Fancy might suggest.

CREUSA.

CREUSA.

Too well indeed,

O *Phorbas*, much too well indeed we know
Nicander left no Heir to his Perfections,
 No Image of himself.—And yet, good *Phorbas*,
 Blame not my Folly, nor demand a Reason
 If I intreat thee to examine strictly
 The Fortunes of this young Unknown. The Priests
 Or Priestesses may know more than they entrust
 To his unwary Youth. The Sage he spake of,
 Could'st thou not search him out; 'tis somewhere near
 He dwells, I think, upon the Mountain's Brow.
 Thou wonder'st at me, call it if thou please
 A Woman's Weakness; but obey me, *Phorbas*.

PHORBAS.

You say I wonder, 'tis indeed to see
 My honor'd Queen employ her Thoughts thus idly
 On Grievings long past; when things of dear Concern
 To her and *Athens* should alarm her nearly.

CREUSA.

What things of near Concern?

PHORBAS.

See'st thou not, Queen,
 Thy Crown, *Erechtheus'* Crown, the Crown of *Athens*,
 Wav'ring in Fortune's Power?

CREUSA.

The Gods will fix it,

PHORBAS.

The Gods? Ah, great *Creusa*, may my Fears
 Be vain and groundless; but I fear the Gods
 Have left us to ourselves. When we resign'd
 The *Athenian* Scepter to a Stranger Hand
 We did reject their Guidance. Wherefore come we

To *Delphi* now, but that th' offended Gods
Have turn'd too long an inattentive Ear
To our ill-judg'd Petitions.

CREUSA.

Why ill-judg'd?

We ask'd for Heirs.

PHORBAS.

We did; for *Xuthus*' Heirs,
The Race of *Aeolus*.—I know, great Queen,
They were to spring from thee; but Heaven permits not
The native Pureness of th' *Athenian* Soil
Should mix with foreign Clay. I wish we find not
More alien Kings at *Delphi*.

CREUSA.

Think'st thou *Xuthus*

Deceives us then? His Worth, his Piety,
Forbid the Thought. Besides, the sacred Place
Admits not of Deceit.

PHORBAS.

Credulity

Is not the Vice of Age. Forgive me, Queen,
If I suspect that Piety which brings us
To search for Kings at *Delphi*. Might not *Athens*
Have chosen her own Monarch? Her brave Youth,
Her bearded Sages, are they not the Flower
And Pride of *Greece*? Nay, might'st not thou, *Creusa*,
With liberal Hand bestow th' Imperial Wreath?
And who has better Right?

CREUSA.

The Gods, who gave it

To me, and my great Ancestors.

PHORBAS.

PHORBAS.

Whate'er

The Gods bestow can never be resum'd
 Tho' we repent. The pious Populace
 Will rev'rence Kings from Heaven.

CREUSA.

And wherefore not?

PHORBAS.

O Queen, perhaps my Fears ate too officious,
 But let thy Servant beg —

CREUSA.

I know thy Zeal

For me, and for thy Country. Rest assur'd,
Creusa never will consent to ought
 Which can endanger *Athens*.

PHORBAS.

My Heart thanks thee!

CREUSA.

Mean while the Youth *Ilyffus* —

PHORBAS.

Should the King

Confirm'd by Oracles presume to fix
 A Stranger on the Throne. —

CREUSA.

He will not do it.

PHORBAS.

I hope he will not, yet —

CREUSA.

The Youth I spake of,

Wilt thou enquire? —

PHORBAS.

A T R A G E D Y.

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PHORBAS.

Should *Xuthus* lay aside
His usual Mildness, and assume at once
The Monarch and the Husband, could'st thou then —

CREUSA.

In *Athens*' Cause I could resist them All.
But cease these vain Suspitions. A few Hours
Will prove thy Fears were groundless. Mean while, *Phorbas*,
Thou wilt find Means to inform thyself
Touching this unknown Youth.

PHORBAS.

By yonder Guards
The King should be at hand.

CREUSA.

I will retire
To the Pavilion, and expect him there.
Yet hear me, *Phorbas*; let not *Xuthus* know
Why thou enquir'st.

PHORBAS.

Xuthus has other Cares.

CREUSA.

The Priestess too, I would confer with her,
Tho' that *Lycea* may perform. Farewell,
And prosper in thy Task. — Alas, *Lycea*, [*Exit Phorbas*]
There is a Secret labours in my Breast,
But Fate forbids that I should give it Utterance.
This boding Heart was early taught to feel
Too sensibly; each distant Doubt alarms it;
It starts at Shadows. — But retire we, Maid,
Grief is th' unhappy Charter of our Sex;
The Gods who gave us readier Tears to shed
Gave us more Cause to shed them. [*Exeunt*]

The End of the First ACT.

B

ACT



A C T H.

The Laurel Grove.

ALETES and ILYSSUS.

ALETES.

S EEM'D she disturb'd when she beheld thee?

ILYSSUS.

Much;

And when I gave her the slight Hints I knew
 Relating to my Fortunes, she dissolv'd
 In silent Tears: such soft Humanity
 Sure never dwelt in any Breast but hers.
 Nor did I think till now that I had Cause
 Of Discontent; but since she wept my Fate,
 I seem to find a Reason in her Grief,
 And feel myself unhappy.

ALETES.

Why unhappy?

ILYSSUS.

I know not why; and yet to be confin'd
 Thus to a single Spot; to draw in Air,
 To take in Nourishment, to live, to die,
 For this was Man design'd? Ah, good Aletes,
 Sure thou hast taught me, Godlike Man was made
 For nobler Purposes of general Good;

For

A T R A G E D Y.

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For Action, not for Rest.—The Queen propos'd,
I should attend her to th' *Athenian* State;
Would'st thou advise it? Do'st thou think, *Aletes*,
She meant I should attend her?

ALETES.

Doubtless, Youth,
If she propos'd, she meant it.

ILYSSUS.

And would'st thou
Advise I should attend her?

ALETES.

Wherefore not?

ILYSSUS.

May I desert these Shades? or can I leave
Thee, thee, my good *Aletes*?

ALETES.

O *Ilyssus*,

Strive not to hide thy Heart; from me thou can'st not;
I form'd it, and I know it. *Delphi's* Shades
Have now no Peace for thee, thy Bosom feels
Ambition's active; unrelenting Fires.
Thou wishest, and thou hop'st, thou know'st not what.
'Tis Glory thou would'st have: Go then, brave Youth,
Where Virtue calls thee: be the Means but noble
Thou can'st not soar too high.

ILYSSUS.

My more than Father!

Thy Words inspire me, and I feel a Warmth
Unknown before.—But then, my Birth—

ALETES.

Thy Birth?

Did I not early teach thee to despise
A casual Good? Thou art thyself, *Ilyssus*.
Inform me, Youth, would'st thou be what thou art,

Thus fair, thus brave, thus sensibly alive
 To Glory's finest Foes; or give up all,
 To be descended from a Line of Kings,
 The tenth perhaps from *Jove*?—I see thy Cheek
 Glows a repentant Blush.—Our greatest Heroes,
 Those Gods on Earth, those Friends of Human kind,
 Whose great Examples I would set before thee,
 Were once unknown like thee. And yet, if Birth
 Concern thee, know, prophetic is my Speech,
 Thy Fate is now at work, and a few Hours
 May show thee what thou art.—My Words alarm thee.

ILYSSUS.

They do indeed. O tell me—

ALETES.

'Tis in vain
 Thou would'st enquire from me, what Heaven conceals
 Till its fit Time. Didst thou not say, *Ilyssus*,
 The *Pythia* would be here?

ILYSSUS.

She comes.

ALETES.

Retire.

And leave us to ourselves.

ILYSSUS.

I will.—And yet

Might I not know—

ALETES.

From me thou can'st know nothing.

ILYSSUS.

A few Hours, said you?

ALETES.

Hence, and beg of Heaven

To prosper the Event. Retire and leave us. [*Exit Ilyssus.*

Enter

A. T. R. A. G. E. D. Y.

21

Enter PYTHIA.

PYTHIA.

Now good *Aletes*, if thy pregnant Mind,
Deep judging of Events, has ever fram'd
Such artful Truths as won believing Man
To think them born of Heaven, and made my Name
Renown'd in *Greece*, O now exert thy Power.
No common Cause demands it. Kings and States
Are our Solicitors, and *Athens'* Fate
Hangs on my Lips.

ALETES.

I know it well. And now
If, as thou say'st, my secret kind Advice,
And worn Experience in the Ways of Men,
Have gain'd thy Altars Credit, and with Gifts
Loaded thy Shrines, now, by one grateful Act
Thou may'st repay me all.

PYTHIA.

What Act? O speak,
And gladly I obey.

ALETES.

An Act, my PYTHIA,
Which tho' at first it may seem bold and dangerous,
Shall in the End add Lustre to thy Shades,
And make ev'n Kings Protectors of thy Fane.
—O *Pythia*, 'twas the Hand of Heaven itself
Which brought these Royal Suppliants to thy Shrine.
I could unfold a Tale.—But let it rest.
Thou shalt ere Night know all, and bless with me
Th' indulgent Powers above. Only in this
Obey me blindly, *Pythia*.

PYTHIA.

Say in what.

ALETES.

... ALETES.

Declare *Ilyffus* Heir to *Athens'* Crown.

PYTHIA.

Ilyffus Heir? what mean'st thou? 'tis a Fraud
Too palpable.

ALETES.

I knew 'twould startle thee.

But 'tis because thou know'st the Fraud, my *Pythia*,
That it alarms thee. Didst thou really think
This Youth were Heir to the *Athenian* Crown,
Would'st thou not seize the happy Gift of Chance
And to the World proclaim it?

PYTHIA.

True, I should;

And bless my Fate that in these sacred Shades
I had nurs'd up unknowingly a King
For my Protector. But what then might seem
The Consequence, now seems the Cause, *Aletes*;
Will they not say I made the King, to gain
The kind Protector?

ALETES.

So to thee it seems;

But who will say it? the believing many
Will bow with Rev'rence and implicit Faith
To what thy Shrine ordains; and for the few
Who may suspect the Cheat, true Policy
Will keep them silent: should they dare detect
A Fraud like this, and spurn at Right divine,
Where were their Power? The many-headed Beast
Would feel the slacken'd Rein, and from his Back
Shake off the lordly Rider. Nay should *Athens*
Be blind to her own Good, the States of *Greece*,
Thou know'st it well, would arm in thy Defence,

And

And force her to receive the King thou gav'st her.
 His Form, his unknown Birth, his winning Softness,
 His Education here in Heaven's own Eye,
 All plead in his behalf. And, as he tells me,
 The Queen already with unusual Marks
 Of Favour has beheld him. For the King,
 A pious Awe and Rev'rence for the Gods
 Is his distinguish'd Attribute. Thou seem'st
 To weigh my Words. To clear thy Doubts at once,
 Know many Days have past since first I knew
 Of their Approach. Thou think'st I should have told thee,
 It needed not. I have myself prepar'd
 Each previous Circumstance, and found due means
 To forward the Event. Thy Part is easy;
 Behold the Oracle.

PYTHIA reads.

"A banish'd Youth is *Athens'* Cause of Woe."
 How know'st thou that? [Looking earnestly at him.]

ALETES.

Demand not, but read on.

PYTHIA reads.

"For that Youth banish'd, *Athens* must receive
 "Another Youth; and on the young Unknown
 "Who 'tends my Shrine, and whom I call my Son,
 "Bestow th' Imperial Wreath." The God declares
 "No more."

ALETES.

Thou seem'st amaz'd.

PYTHIA.

I am indeed,

To find thee thus instructed on a Theme
 I came prepar'd to mention. The Queen's Passion,
 Her Lover banish'd —————

ALETES.

ALTES.

What thou seest I know
 May tell thee I know more But say, from whence
 Thou gained'st thy Intelligence?

PYTHIA.

From one

Whose Zeal may thwart thy Schemes: a warm old Man,
 And firm in *Athen's* Cause, who came to-day
 Before the rest, and led by my Enquiries
 Gave me those Hints on which I thought to build
 Prophetic, doubtful Answers: But I find
 My best Instructor here.

ALTES.

Perhaps thou dost.
 Of this rest well assur'd, I ne'er had ask'd
 Of *Pythia* ought but what I knew with Safety
 She might comply with.

PYTHIA.

Tell me what thou know'st.

ALTES.

Not yet; 'tis better thou remain in Ignorance
 Till all be finish'd. But pronounce the Oracle,
 And leave the rest to me. Dost thou distrust me?

PYTHIA.

I do not.—Yet if on slight Hints alone
 Thou form'st this weighty Fraud, consider well.
 What may or may not follow.—By thy Looks
 There should be something hid.—Thy coming hither
 Was much upon the Time we found this Child.
 And since, with what almost paternal Care
 Thou hast instructed him. Tho' that indeed
 Might spring from thy Benevolence of Heart,

Which

A · T R A G E D Y.

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Which I have known is boundless. Say, *Aletes*,
What should I think ? Thou smil'st.

ALETES.

Wilt thou obey me ?

PYTHIA.

I must ; and yet if 'tis a Fraud, *Aletes*,
The warm old Man of whom I spake detests
A Stranger King. Ev'n *Xuthus* self, whose Worth
He doth acknowledge great, he views with Pain
Upon th' *Athenian* Throne.

ALETES.

I know him well ;

'Tis *Phorbas*. Do not wonder at my Words,
But find a Means that I may see the Queen
In secret, unobserv'd by prying Eyes,
And all that old Man's Fears, and Rage shall vanish.
He shall with Joy receive a Stranger King.
Wilt thou devise the Means ?

PYTHIA.

I now begin

To hope indeed. There is some Secret hid
Of most important Weight. But does the Queen—

ALETES.

I will not answer thee ; my Time's too precious.
Only devise some Means that I may see her
Quite unobserv'd by all.

PYTHIA.

You cannot see her

Till all be past. Will that suffice ?

ALETES.

It will.

PYTHIA.

Here in the Laurel Grove.

E

ALETES.

ALETES.

No Place more fit.

But O be careful, *Pythia*, that the King
 Observe us, not; for 'tis of mighty Moment
 He should believe this substituted Youth
 Of Race *Æolian*. To which End, my *Pythia*,
 I have among the Priests these few Days past,
 When they suspected not th' Approach of *Xuthus*,
 Dropp'd doubtful Hints as if I had discover'd
 Some antique Marks amid the Osier Twigs
 Which form'd *Ihyffus*' Cradle, that denote
 He sprang from *Æolus*: And at the Cave
 Of great *Trophonius* have I ta'en due Care
 Such Answers should be given as would induce
 One of less Faith than *Xuthus* to expect
 An Heir of his own Family.

PYTHIA.

The Boy,

Knows he of thy Intentions?

ALETES.

No, nor must
 Till ripening Time permit. His Fate depends
 Upon his Ignorance.—Soft, who comes here?

PYTHIA.

It is the warm old Man, and, as I think,
 Some fair Attendant of the Queen. Retire.
 I would know more, but—Wherefore do'st thou gaze
 So ardently upon them?

ALETES.

Hence, away,

We must not now be seen, [*Exeunt Pythia and Aletes.*]

Enter LYCEA and PHORBA.

LYCEA.

This Place seems quite retir'd. Here if thou wait

I will

I will inform the Queen, and her Impatience
 Will bring her on the Instant. Surely, *Phorbas*,
 Something mysterious lurks beneath her Tears;
 Her strange Anxieties. Since thou wer't absent
 This unknown Youth alone has fill'd her Thoughts,
 Of him alone she talks, recounts his Words,
 Describes his Looks, his Gestures; loves to dwell
 On each Particular. Ere thou wer't gone
 She wish'd and even expected thy Return;
 Dispatch'd me often, tho' she knew 'twas vain,
 To watch for thy Arrival. When the King
 Approach'd, she smooth'd her Brow, as if to hide
 The Strugglings of her Mind; nay seem'd afraid
 He should suspect her Sorrows.

PHORBAS.

Then to him
 She mention'd not this Youth?

LYCEA.

Her Conduct there
 Was most mysterious. With a Voice of Fear,
 She slightly dropp'd that she had seen a Youth
 Whom she could wish to bear with her to *Athens*.
 The King consented, and with Smiles propos'd
 They should adopt him.

PHORBAS.

Ha! adopt him, said'st thou?

LYCEA.

In Sport he spake, but at his Words a Glow
 Of sudden Joy spread o'er her Face, her Tongue
 Forgot Restraint, and in his Praise grew lavish;
 Then stopp'd again, and hesitating strove
 To check its Zeal, as fearful to betray
 Some hidden Transport.

E 2

PHORBAS.

PHORBAS.

Whatsoe'er it be,
I soon shall damp her Joy. This Youth, *Lycea*,
Must not to *Athens*.—But behold, the Queen.

LYCEA.

O how impatient! ere I could return
To tell her thou wer't here, she comes herself,
Eager to learn thy Tidings.

Enter CREUSA.

CREUSA.

Now, my *Phorbas*,
Say what thou know'st at once. The King already
Consents he should attend us!

PHORBAS.

Never, never
Shall *Athens* see that Youth.

CREUSA:

What mean'st thou, *Phorbas*?

PHORBAS.

Too much already of *Aeolian* Blood.
Has hapless *Athens* known.

CREUSA.

Aeolian Blood!

PHORBAS.

The King consents! I doubt not his Consent.
—Yes, 'twas my Word, great Queen, *Aeolian* Blood;
This Youth descends from *Aeolus*.

CREUSA.

Be dumb,
Or bring me better Tidings.

PHORBAS,

Worse I cannot,
But what I speak is Truth.

CREUSA.

A TRAGEDY;

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CREUSA.

Peace, Monster, Peace!

Thou know'st not Truth: 'Tis thy affected Zeal
For *Athens*, for thy Country, that suggests
This horrid Falshood; 'tis thy Hate of *Xanthus*,

PHORBAS.

What means my *Queen*? or how have I deserv'd
Such harsh Expressions? Does my honest Love
For *Athens*, and *Creusa*, subject me
To such unkind Suspicions?

CREUSA.

Gracious Gods!

It cannot be.—Alas, forgive me, *Phorbas*,
I know not what I say, thy Words strike thro' me,
They pierce my very Soul. O I had hop'd—
But tell me all, tho' I believe thee honest,
Thy Zeal for *Athens*, and for me, may make thee
Too hasty of Belief. Why art thou silent?

PHORBAS.

Amazement stops my Tongue, these Starts of Passion,
This Violence of Grief, must have a Cause.

CREUSA.

Perhaps they have, perhaps to thee, good *Phorbas*,
This bursting Heart may open all its Sorrows.
But tell me first, what are thy Proofs? from whence
Gain'dst thou this cur'd Intelligence?

PHORBAS.

O *Queen*,

Thy Looks, thy Words—I know not how to answer.
Yet if there be Offence in what I speak,
My Ignorance offends, not I offend.
Know then, *Creusa*, from the Priests who tend

This

This *Delphic* Shrine, by your Command I learnt
My first Intelligence.

CREUSA.

And did they say

This Youth was of *Æolian* Race?

PHORBAS.

They did.

At least their Words imported little less.

They judg'd me *Xuthus'* Friend, not Enemy,

As would thy Rage suggest, and as a Friend

Dropp'd Hints they thought would please me.

CREUSA.

Then, perhaps,

It was not Truth they spake, they but deceiv'd

Thy Ear with well judg'd Flattery.

PHORBAS.

What follow'd

Confirm'd it Truth. Has the King mention'd to thee

What Promises were given him at the Shrine

Of sage *Trophonius*?

CREUSA.

General Promises

Of sure Success; no more.

PHORBAS.

Know then, great Queen,

As I return'd from Converse with the Priests,

I met his Friend and Bosom Fav'rite *Lycon*.

Joy sparkled in his Eyes, and his vain Tongue

O'erflow'd with Transport. I observ'd it well,

And gave the Torrent Passage, nay with Art

Ev'n led it blindly forward. Till at length

He open'd his whole Soul, and under Seal

Of firmest Secrecy told me the King

Would

A T R A G E D Y.

31

Would find an Heir at *Delphi*, such an Heir
As would rejoice the unapparent Shades
Of his great Ancestors. At that I started.
He found his Error then, and told me, glozing,
That great *Trophenius* had *almost* proclaim'd,
Tho' not expressly, *Xuthus* here should find
An Heir of his own Race.

CREUSA.

Of his own Race?

PHORBAS.

So said he; whether great *Trophenius* spake
This Oracle, I know not; but I know
Too well whose Oracle to me declar'd it.

CREUSA.

Think'st thou this Youth——

PHORBAS.

Grant it were only done

To try my Zeal, why should they try it now,
Unless some close Design requir'd that Trial?
Yes, mighty Queen, I do believe this Youth
Is our intended King. But, by yon Heaven,
If it be he, or any other He
Of *Xuthus*' Race, he shall not reign in *Athens*.
This Poinard first shall drink his Blood.

CREUSA.

Forbear!

That Thought distracts me.—Tho' perhaps 'tis just.
——O *Phorbas*, 'twas my Hope, my Wish, my Prayer
That Youth might reign in *Athens*. But thy Words
Strike deadly Damps like baleful *Aconite*,
And poison all within.

PHORBAS.

What means my Queen?

CREUSA.

CREUSA.

O *Phorbas*, O *Lycea* — but first swear
By *Nemesis* and the tremendous Powers
Who punish broken Faith, no Word, no Hint
Shall 'scape your Lips of all your Queen declares.

BOTH.

We swear !

CREUSA.

Know then, O Pain to Memory !

I had a Son.

PHORBAS.

A Son !

LYCEA.

Good Heaven !

PHORBAS.

A Son !

CREUSA.

O my full Heart ! Thy Mother, my *Lycea*,
Knew all the fatal Process of my Woes,
And was their only Solace. *Phorbas*, yes,
I had a Son, but witness every God
Whose genial Power presides o'er nuptial Leagues,
Nicander was my wedded Lord. That Night,
That fatal Night which drove him forth from *Athens*,
Forc'd from my swelling Womb, ere yet mature,
Its precious Burthen. To thy Mother's Cares
I ow'd my Life. In secret she assuag'd
My piercing Pangs, and to *Nicander's* Arms
In secret she convey'd the wretched Infant.
What follow'd well thou know'st. *Nicander* fell,
And with him doubtless fell the dear, dear Charge,
Consign'd to his Protection. Yet, good *Phorbas*,
When I beheld this Youth, his Looks, his Voice,

His

A TRAGEDY.

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His Age, his unknown Birth, all, all conspir'd
To cheat me into Hopes. Alas, how fallen !
How blasted all !

PHORBAS,

Great Queen, my Tears confess,
An old Man's Tears, which rarely fall, confess
How much I share your Anguish. Had I known
Nicander was your Lord, by Earth and Heaven,
I would have rais'd all *Athens* in his Cause ;
Nay, been a Rebel to the best of Masters,
Ere the dear Pledge of your unspotted Loves
Should thus have fallen untimely. Now, alas,
I have not ev'n one flattering Hope to give thee.
Till now I oft have wonder'd why so far
Their Rage pursued *Nicander*. 'Tis too plain,
They knew the precious Burthen which he bore,
And for the hapless Child the Father died,

CREUSA.

O God ! I feel the Truth of what thou utter'st,
And my Heart dies within me. O *Lycea*,
Who, who would be a Mother !

PHORBAS.

Be a Queen,
And turn thy Grief to Rage. Shall Aliens sport
With thy Misfortunes ? Shall insulting Spoilers
Smile o'er the Ruins of thy hapless State,
While all the golden Harvest is their own ?
Shall *Xuthus* triumph ? shall his Race succeed ?
While thine, I mean not to provoke thy Tears,
Thy tender Blossoms are torn rudely off
Almost ere they bloom.

F

CREUSA.

CREUSA.

It shall not be,
 No, ye immortal Powers! — Yet let us wait
 Till the dire Truth glare on us. One short Hour
 And Doubt shall be no more. Then, *Phorbas*, then
 Should he presume to place on *Athens'* Throne
 His alien Race, nay tho' this beauteous Youth,
 This dear Resemblance of my murder'd Lord,
 Should be the fatal Choice, by that dear Shade,
 Which perish'd as it reach'd the Gates of Life,
 I will, I think I will, assist thy Vengeance.
 —Soft, who comes here? 'Tis he! how innocent!
 How winning soft he looks! Whate'er it be,
 He knows not the Deceit. Look on him, *Phorbas*;
 Nay, thou shalt question him.

PHORBAS.

Not I. Great Queen,
 Resume yourself, nor let this fond Persuasion
 Betray you to a Weakness you should blush at.

CREUSA.

If possible I will.

Enter ILYSSUS.

ILYSSUS.

Illustrious Queen,
 The Altar stands prepar'd, and all Things wait
 Your Royal Presence: From the King I come,
 His Messenger.

CREUSA.

We will attend his Pleasure.
 Be near me, *Phorbas*; I may want thy Counsel.

ILYSSUS.

She looks not on me sure as she was wont.
 I'll speak to her. Permit me, gracious Queen,

To

A T R A G E D Y.

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My disappointed Hopes. O honest *Phorbas*,
 O good old Man, thy penetrating Mind
 Saw early their Designs. 'Tis to supply
Nicander's Loss (O ne'er to be supply'd!)
 That we must call in Strangers to the Throne,
 And yield our Scepters to *Æolian* Hands.
 —Yes, ye great Shades of my Progenitors,
 I hear ye call, ye shall, ye shall have Vengeance!

LYCEA.

Whatever you design, conceal at least
 This Transport of your Rage.

CREUSA.

Why loiters *Phorbas*?

He saw my Anguish, wherefore comes he not
 To its Relief? They fool me past Endurance.
 Rely they on the Weakness of my Sex?
Lycea, they shall find this feeble Arm
 In such a Cause can lay the Distaff by,
 And grasp th' unerring Thunderbolt of *Jove*.
 O *Phorbas*, art thou come?

Enter PHORBAS from the Temple.

PHORBAS.

Now, mighty Queen,
 Are my Suspicions just? is *Phorbas* honest?

CREUSA.

As Light, as Truth itself. My Counsellor,
 My Bosom Friend!

PHORBAS.

Now shall a casual Likeness,
 If such there be, a semblant Cast of Features,
 The Sport of Nature in a human Form,
 Shall Trifles light as these weigh down Conviction?
 O Queen, from first to last th' apparent Scheme

Glares

Glares on us now. Why were we brought to *Delphi*,
 But that this Youth has long been nurtur'd here
 In secret from the World; perhaps the Son
 Of *Xuthus*' self, plac'd here at first to hide
 The Guilt and Shame of some dishonest Mother,
 Tho' now applied to more pernicious Ends.

CREUSA.

It may be so.

PHORBAS.

And why, say why, to-day,
 While *Xuthus* stays behind for Oracles
 He wanted not, is young *Ilyffus* bid
 To meet your Eyes, and win with artful Tales
 Your easy Heart?

CREUSA.

Bid! was he bid to do it?

PHORBAS.

I saw the Priestess whisper something to him,
 Then loud she bade him wait for thy Approach.
 She must, forsooth, retire to sacred Gloom,
 And wait for Inspiration. *Xuthus*' Gold
 Was what inspir'd the Traitors. Yet, good Heaven,
 When from the Shrine she gave the fraudulent Words,
 With what strange Art the holy Hypocrite
 In mimic Trances died!—"A banish'd Youth
 "Is *Athens*' Cause of Woe." Too truly said,
 Tho' for a wicked Purpose, to allure
 Thy easy Faith, and lead thee to admit
 The Fraud which follow'd.

CREUSA.

Never, never, *Phorbas*,
 Will I that Fraud admit. How readily
 Did *Xuthus*, when my foolish Fondness ask'd it,

Consent

A T R A G E D Y.

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Consent to my Request! * Thou heard'st him say [*To Lycea:
We should adopt this Youth; in seeming Sport
He spake it, but ev'n then th' insulting Tyrant
Couch'd fatal Truths beneath th' ambiguous Phrase.

PHORBAS.

Why should a Youth design'd for Solitude
Be taught the Arts of War? He saw himself
The Impropriety. Who is this Sage
That has instructed him? And why should *Lycon*
O'erflow with sudden Joy, but that he found,
From thy apparent Fondness for the Boy,
Their Schemes grew practicable. Nay, to-day,
When to the Priestess' self my honest Love
For *Athens*, and Dislike of Stranger Kings,
Burst freely forth, she chid my hasty Zeal,
Commended *Xuthus*, talk'd of Piety
And Rev'rence to the Gods: 'Twas to their Priests
She meant, their meddling Priests, who dare presume
To sport with Thrones, to sell their Gods for Gold,
And stamp rank Falshoods with the Seal of Heaven.

LYCEA.

Forbear, you are too loud so near the Temple;
Xuthus himself will hear.

CREUSA.

We would be heard.
Instruct me, *Phorbas*, by what means to crush
This impious Combination.

PHORBAS.

Athens yet

Has honest Hearts. Yes, *Phorbas* yet has Friends
Who dare be Patriots, and prefer their Country
To *Xuthus*' kindest Smile. Some such are here
Ev'n now at *Delphi*. But, illustrious Queen,

We

We must with Caution act. The Name of Heaven,
Howe'er usurp'd, adds Vigour to their Cause,
And weakens ours. We might in secret find
A sure Revenge.

CREUSA.

What?

PHORBAS.

Death.

CREUSA.

Of *Xuthus*?

PHORBAS.

His

Might follow, but the more immediate Cause
Should earliest be remov'd, the Boy.

CREUSA.

The Boy!

Why should he die? Believe me, honest *Phorbas*,
He knows not of the Fraud. His every Look
Proclaims his Innocence. If impious Men
Make him their Instrument of evil Deeds,
Can he be blam'd? Bred up in Shades, poor Youth,
He never knew the Arts of base Mankind,
Nor should he share their Punishment.

PHORBAS.

O Queen,

They have too well succeeded. This fond Passion,
Which their insidious Cunning first inspir'd,
Clings close about your Heart, and may at last
Undo us all. — But hark, that Noise declares
The finish'd Rites. Retire we to the Grove,
And there will I enforce —

CREUSA.

No, let us stay.

I will

A TRAGEDY.

41

I will confront this artful Politician,
And shew him I am yet a Queen.

PHORBAS.

Perhaps

'Twere better to retire till our full Scheme
Were ripe for Vengeance. — * Yet if we remain,
High Words must rise, which will alarm her Pride } * *Aside.*
And fit her for my Purpose.

Enter XUTHUS, ILYSSUS, Priests, Virgins, Guards, &c.
from the Temple.

XUTHUS, (*coming up to Creusa*)

Thy Looks, *Creusa*, thy abrupt Departure
Affronting to the God himself, and these
His sacred Ministers, too plainly shew
Irreverent Rage, resisting Heaven's high Will.
Nor do'st thou want I see, unthinking Woman,
Inflamers of thy Folly.—But of this
Enough; behold the Youth whom Heaven designs
Thy Heir, and mine.

CREUSA.

My Heir!

XUTHUS.

Thy Heir, *Creusa*.

What means that haughty Look? Why with Contempt
Do'st thou behold him? Is he chang'd, *Creusa*?
Have a few Hours so totally transform'd him?
Is all that winning Grace of which thou spok'st
Almost with Rapture, is that native Charm
Of Innocence all vanish'd? Hear him speak,
Hear if he talks less sensibly than when
Thy pleas'd Attention hung upon his Words,
And lent each Syllable an added Grace.
What hast thou found, or thy grave Monitor

G

What

What has he found, which can so suddenly
 Have wrought this wond'rous Change? Is it because
 The Gods have thought with thee that he deserves
 A Crown? or is it that my Will consents?
 And therefore thine, proud Queen, perversely strives
 To combat thy Affections?

CREUSA.

We methinks

Have chang'd Affections. The calm, steady *Xuthus*,
 Whose equal Mind ne'er knew the stormy Gusts
 Of discomposing Passion, now can feel
 Indecent Warmth when touch'd by pious Zeal.
 Nay he, to whom the tend'rer Sentiments
 Seem'd but the Weakness of the human Frame,
 Now wakes inspir'd with some unusual Softness.
 Have Oracles the Power to raise at once
 The kind Affections? or did he conceal
 The smother'd Flame, 'till authoris'd by Heaven
 It might burst out unquestion'd?

XUTHUS.

Haughty Queen,

I understand thee well; thou think'st this Youth
 A Substitute of mine, and dar'st affront
 Yon awful Shrine, the Fountain of pure Truth.
 But by that God who bears the vengeful Bow,
 And whose large Eye——Yet wherefore should I strive
 By Oaths to undeceive thee; Breasts like mine
 Can scorn th' imputed Falshood they detest.
 Nor am I now to learn from what vile Source
 Thy vain Suspicions rise. But know, proud Queen,
 This Youth shall reign in *Athens*; and yet more
 To punish thy vain Pride, since thou provok'st it,
 I do believe him of *Æolian* Race.

CREUSA.

CREUSA.

Thou do'st?

XUTHUS.

I do. A Race as glorious, Queen,
As *Cecrops'* boasted lineage. For the Youth,
Were I to beg the choicest Boon of Heaven
From my own Loins to rise, I could not hope
A nobler Offspring.

PHORBAS. [*Aside to Creusa.*
Hear'st thou that?

CREUSA.

I do,

And will revenge the Insult.

ILYSSUS. [*Kneeling.*

Gracious Queen!

What have I done which should estrange thee to me?
Am I the unhappy Cause of these Dissentions?

CREUSA.

Kneel not to me, *Ilyssus*.

XUTHUS.

Kneel not to her;

'Tis I am thy Protector, and thy Friend,
Nay now thy Father.

ILYSSUS.

Yet, O mighty King,

Permit me at her Royal Feet to pay
My humblest Duty. If I call thee Father,
She sure must be a Mother.

[*She turns away disorder'd.*

XUTHUS.

Rise, *Ilyssus*,

Thou seest she stands unmov'd.

G 2

ILYSSUS.

LYRUS.

No, now she ~~is~~ *Athena*.

I see it in her Eyes.

CREUSA.

I will, I will

Be Mistress of my Soul.—Why kneel'st thou, Youth,
I blame not thee.

XUTHUS.

Me then thou blam'st, *Creusa*.

I am the Object of thy Rage, 'Tis *Xuthus*
Thou think'st unworthy of th' *Athenian* Throne.

CREUSA.

*Athen*s might well have spar'd a foreign Lustre,
Secure of Fame, had *Xuthus* ne'er been born.

XUTHUS.

Ungrateful Queen, had *Xuthus* ne'er been born
What now had *Athen*s been?

CREUSA.

Perhaps in Ruins,

And better so than to become the Prey
Of needy wand'ring Strangers.

XUTHUS.

Earth, and Heaven!

This the Return?—I knew thou never loved'st me;
Yet, witness Heav'n, I ravish'd not thy Hand,
Thou gav'st it fully, but yet thou gav'st it;
And I well hop'd thy Female Sense of Honour,
Of Duty to thy Lord, might have secur'd
At least my future Peace. Thy tend'rer Thoughts,
The Wife's best Ornament, I knew were buried
In a Plebeian Grave.

CREUSA.

Plebeian Grave?

XUTHUS.

Fool that I was, I flatter'd thy vain Sorrows,

Indulg'd

A T R A G E D Y.

45.

Indulg'd their weak Excess, and rais'd, I find,
Imaginary Rivals in the Tomb.
But never more, *Creusa*, never more
Shalt thou affront my ill-requited Fondness.
I will destroy that Pageant of thy Passion,
Tear from that Idol Shrine th' insulting Wreaths,
And cancel thy mock Worship.

I L Y S S U S.

Gracious Queen,

Retire a while.

C R E U S A.

Be gone. — Insulting Tyrant,
Touch but a Wreath that's sacred to *Nicander*,
And by pale *Hecate's* awful Rites I swear
Thy Life shall pay the Forfeit; nay the Lives
Of thy whole dastard Race. — Plebeian Grave!
Had that Plebeian liv'd, Imperial *Xuthus*
Had' crouch'd beneath his Feet.

X U T H U S.

O would to Heaven
This scepter'd Arm could raise him from the Earth,
That thou might'st see how infamous a Slave
Thou dar'st prefer to *Xuthus*. — Come, *Ilyssus*,
We leave her to her Follies. Look not on her,
She merits not thy Tenderness. Away.
If Reason should again resume its Seat
We may expect her at the Banquet. Come,
All here must be our Guests.

[*Exeunt Xuthus, Ilyssus, &c.*

[*Creusa, Phobas, and Lycea stay.*

P H O B A S.

Curb not thy Passion, give it Vent, great Queen,
And let it burst in Thunder on thy Foes.

C R E U S A.

CREUSA.

It shall, by Heaven it shall.—I thought till now
 My Griefs were sacred, but this Monster dares
 Insult even Misery itself.—O *Phorbas*,
 Forgive me if my Tears will force a Passage.—
 Now, they are gone, and I will weep no more,
 Come, faithful Counsellor of Vengeance, come,
 Instruct me how to act, steel all my Soul;
 Let not Remorse or Pity's Coward Voice,
 The Bane of noble Deeds, intrude to cross us.
Nicander's injur'd Ghost shall aid our Counsels.
 Say, shall he die?

PHORBAS.

Not yet; first be his Schemes
 Abortive all, his politic Designs,
 Then let him die despis'd.

CREUSA.

Agreed; but how?

PHORBAS.

Now at the Banquet may we crush at once
 His full blown hopes. The fatal Cause remov'd,
 Th' Effect of course must cease.

CREUSA.

What Cause?

PHORBAS.

The Boy.

I see thou shudder'st at it; but, great Queen,
 Hear but the cogent Reasons I shall offer
 And thou wilt think as I do. For the Boy
 Heav'n knows I wish to spare him, but no Means
 No earthly Means but this can curse completely
 This politic Designer. Doubtless long
 This fav'rite Scheme to place on *Athens'* Throne

His

His hated Race, has labour'd in his Breast,
 And all his Hours employ'd. On this alone
 He builds the firm Foundation of his Peace,
 His Happiness to come. His Death were nothing,
 He knows his Friends, the Minions of his Fortune,
 He knows all *Greece*, such is their Dread and Awe
 Of *Delphi's* Shrine; will join in the Support
 Of this deceitful Claim; and that firm Hope
 Will make him triumph ev'n in Death, and laugh
 At our too shallow Vengeance.

CREUSA.

Laugh he shall not.

No, I will punish home.

PHORBAS.

You cannot punish

By any Means but this. And know, great Queen,
 I have a Poison of such subtle Force,
 (Why do'st thou start?) of such amazing Strength,
 Yet so peculiar in its Operation,
 That it shall seem the Surfeit of the Feast,
 Not we have done the Deed. At least shall seem so
 To all but *Xuthus*' self; for he methinks
 Should know the Truth, at least suspect it strongly.
 And yet not dare Revenge.

CREUSA.

I cannot bear it;

Howe'er we fail in our Revenge; my *Phorbas*,
 The Boy must live.

PHORBAS.

Good Heav'n! is this *Creusa*?

Is this the vengeful Queen who would not hear
 Remorse or Pity's Voice?—Farewel then *Athens*;
 Yes, my poor Country, thou must sink enslav'd

To

To foreign Tyrants. She who should defend
Thy Rights, thy Liberties, stands tamely by
And sees the Yoke impos'd, nay smiles to see it :
Thy Queen, the last of her illustrious Line,
Consents to thy Destruction.

CREUSA.

Never, *Phorbas*.

Do what thou wilt. With this last parting Pang
I give him to thy Rage.—Yet oh, beware
I see him not again. One Look from him
Would baffle all thy Schemes.

PHORBAS.

Now at the Banquet

Will we infuse the Draught, ev'n in the Cup
Which the King's self presents to his young Heir
In Token of Election.

CREUSA.

Stay, good *Phorbas*.

PHORBAS.

Already have I for the just Design
Suborn'd a faithful Slave. Nay, should it fail,
I have a trusty Band, a chosen few,
Athenian Souls who scorn to bow the Knee
To any foreign Lord ; these will I place
At the Pavilion Doors, if need require,
To second our Attempt.

CREUSA.

Yet stay, good *Phorbas*.

How kindly did he seem to sympathize
With my Distress ! nay almost chid the King,
When his loud Rage——

PHORBAS.

He had been taught his Lesson.

'Twas

'Twas all Design, all Artifice to work
Upon a Woman's Weakness.

CREUSA.

Think'st thou so?

PHORBAS,

I do. But, O my Queen, be more than Woman,
Conquer this Foible of thy Sex.

CREUSA.

Heav'n knows

How much it costs to do it. — Go then, *Phorbas*,
I cannot bid thee prosper. [Exit *Phorbas*,

O *Lycea*,

Thou know'st not what I feel, — Haste, call him back, —
No, stay — I think the Bitterness is past,
And I can bear it now. Lend me thy Arm,
I would retire, *Lycea*. — Yet from what
Should I retire? I cannot from myself! —
O Boy, thou art reveng'd; whate'er thou suffer'st
Is light, to what thy Murd'ress feels! [Exit;

The End of the Third ACT.





A C T IV.

The Laurel Grove.

PHORBAS and Athenians.

PHORBAS.

THIS Way, my Friends; at the Pavilion Doors
Stand ready arm'd, that if we need your Aid
You may observe the Sign, and crush at once
These vile Usurpers on the Rights of *Athens*.

I hope we want ye not.—I must be hid

A while, lest *Xuthus* should suspect my Presence,

The Queen too may repent, I'll therefore shun her
Till the Deed's done, irrevocably done.

} *Aside.*

—But stir not till I come.—What Noise is that?

Retire, my Friends, the Temple's Postern Door
Grates on its Hinge.—Be secret, and we prosper.

[Exeunt severally.]

Enter ALETES and PYTHIA.

ALETES.

This Quarrel was unlucky. A slight Breach
Had lent my Purpose Strength; but wrought thus high
It may defeat our Hopes. She cannot now
With Ease recede from her too rash Resolves,
At least not unsuspected. Did she, say'st thou,
Reject thy Message?

PYTHIA.

A TRAGEDY.

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PYTHIA.

Scarcely did she pay
The decent Dues my sacred Office claims.
And when I prest her more, with sullen Pride
She silently withdrew.

ALETES.

See her I must.

Where went she ?

PYTHIA.

To the Shades which over-hang
Th' Aonian Fount.

ALETES.

I will pursue her thither.

PYTHIA.

It may not be, for now I know thy Secret
'Tis my turn to be prudent, Know'st thou not
Thou should'st be cautious, nor expose thyself
To prying Eyes ? I heard her, as she pass'd,
In broken Whispers bid *Lycea* haste
To *Phorbas*, and inform that trusty Friend
That she would wait him in the Laurel Grove.
Here then thou may'st surprise them both, and crown
At once thy whole Design.

ALETES.

Thou counsell'st well,

And I will guide me by thy kind Advice.
O *Pythia*, how did every thing conspire
To give me hopes that I should place the Boy
Secure on *Aibens*' Throne, unknown to all
But those whom Fate had made his firmest Friends.
The very Means I us'd to make it sure
Have been most adverse to the Cause I labour'd.
Had I relied on *Xuthus*' Piety,

H 2

Nor

Nor mention'd *Æolus*, Success were mine.
 And let me hope it still. What most I fear
 Is the Queen's Warmth of Passion: To which end
 I must proceed with Tenderness, and hide
 For some short time *Ilyssus* from her Knowledge.
 I have unnumber'd Cautions to premise
 Which her o'erflowing Joy may haply ruin.
 The Banquet, is it ready?

PYTHIA.

It has long
 In vain expected its illustrious Guests.
 The King already has forgot his Rage,
 And hopes returning Thought may move the Queen
 To equal Amity: He therefore finds
 Continual Causes to delay the Feast.

ALETES.

Retire. Perhaps 'tis she; I hear the Steps
 Of some who move this way. [Exit Pythia.

What means he here?

Why art thou absent from the Banquet, Youth?

Enter ILYSSUS.

ILYSSUS.

It has no Joys for me. I fear, *Aletes*,
 Thou and the *Pythia* have most foully play'd
 For my Advancement.

ALETES.

Ha!

ILYSSUS.

Where are the Parents
 Whom thou didst promise to my Hopes? Alas
 I find no Parents here, no kind Regards,
 No inexpressive Fondness. Stern Debate,
 And soul Dissention kindle here their Torch
 To usher in my Greatness. Ev'n *Creusa*,

Whose

Whose Tenderness I know not how alarm'd
 My throbbing Heart with Hopes, and Doubts, and Fears,
 Unfelt before, ev'n she has taught her Eyes
 To look with Strangeness on me. The good King,
 Who yet withdraws not his Protection from me,
 Seems lost in anxious Thought.—Unkind *Aletes*,
 Art thou the Cause of this? Say, am I sprung
 Of Race *Æolian*? For by Heaven I swear,
 By that pure Fountain of immortal Truth,
 I will not brook Deceit. I will again,
 Howe'er the glitt'ring Mischief tempt my Youth,
 Become that humble unknown Thing I was,
 Rather than wear a Crown by Falshood gain'd.
 Speak then, and give me Ease.

ALETES.

My dearest Boy——

His Virtue charms me, tho' it may prevent
 His own Success. O happy, happy *Athens*,
 To gain a King like him, whose honest Soul
 Starts at imagin'd Fraud!

} *Aside.*

ILYSSUS.

Speak on, *Aletes*,
 And do not by that Look of Tenderness,
 And murm'ring to thyself, alarm me more.

ALETES.

What should I speak? This very Morn, *Ilyffus*,
 This very Morn I told thee a few Hours
 Would shew thee what thou wert; but thy Impatience
 Brooks not that short Delay. It seems *Aletes*
 Has lost his usual Credit with *Ilyffus*,
 Ev'n with the Youth his anxious Care has form'd.
 Think'st thou the Man who taught thy feeling Heart
 To start at Falshood, would himself commit

The

The Fraud thou shudder'st at? What have I done,
 Which should induce thee to a Thought so base?
 Did e'er my Precepts contradict my Heart?
 Did I e'er teach a Virtue I not practis'd?
 —I see thou art confounded. Know then, Youth,
 I blame not thy Impatience, nay I praise
 That Modesty which can so soon resume
 Its Seat, when all things round are big with Wonder.
 Ere Night thou shalt know all, till then, *Ilyssus*,
 Behave as *Athens* King.

ILYSSUS.

O good *Aletes*,

Forgive my Rashness. Yes, I know thee honest
 As Truth itself, and know the wond'rous Debt
 I owe thy Goodness. Yet, if thou confess
 That I have Reason for these anxious Cares,
 Thou wilt permit me still to question thee.
 Nay look upon me whilst I speak to thee.
 Perhaps thou hast some secret Cause, *Aletes*,
 For all that kind Attention thou hast shewn me,
 From Infancy till now? Why do'st thou turn
 Thy Eyes to Earth? 'Tis plain thou hast a Cause:
 Thou know'st from whom I spring; how can'st thou else
 With Confidence assert, that yet ere Night
 I shall know all?—Say this at least, *Aletes*,
 Shall the Queen's Anger cease?

ALETES.

It shall, *Ilyssus*.

Ev'n now I wait her here; on what Design
 I must not yet inform thee. The next Time
 Thou shalt behold her thou wilt find a Change
 Incredible indeed, from Rage to Fondness,
 From cold Reserve to Tears of bursting Joy.

[*Ilyssus is going to speak eagerly.*

—Ask

—Ask me no more.—Yet something didst thou say
 Relating to the Cause which fix'd me here
 Thy Guardian, thy Instructor, and—the Time
 Will come, when thou shalt know it all, *Ilyssus*,
 And blest my Memory.

ILYSSUS.

Thou weep'st, *Aletes*.

My Tears will mingle too.

ALETES.

Forbear, and leave me.

Yet stay a while, for now perhaps we part
 To meet no more.

ILYSSUS.

No more ! Thou wilt not leave me
 When most I want thy Care ! 'Twas my first Thought,
 'Twas the first Boon I ask'd of the good King,
 That thou might'st be my kind Instructor still.
 He prais'd my Gratitude, and I had promis'd
 To bring him to thy Cottage. He himself
 Shall be a Suitor to thee.

ALETES.

Thou hast ask'd

Thou know'st not what : It cannot be, *Ilyssus*,
 That *Xuthus* and *Aletes* e'er should meet
 On terms of Amity. The Smiles of Greatness
 To me have lost their Value. For thy Love
 I could do much, and to be sever'd from thee
 Pulls at my Heart-strings. But resistless Fate
 Has fix'd its Seal, and we must part for ever,
 How hard so'er it seem. Thy Youth will soon,
 Amidst the busy Scenes of active Greatness,
 Forget its Monitor : But I must bear
 In hopeless Solitude the Pangs of Absence.

Till

Till Thought shall be no more.

ILYSSUS.

O heav'nly Powers !

Then there is something dreadful yet conceal'd,

I cannot part from thee in Ignorance,

Tell me, *Aletes*,

ALETES.

Would I could ! But now

It must not be.—Haste to the Banquet, Youth,

Thy Duty calls thee thither.

ILYSSUS.

Go I cannot,

Till thou assur'st me we shall meet again.

ALETES.

If possible we will. If not, remember,

When thou shalt know thyself, that on thyself

Thy Fate depends ; that Virtue, Glory, Happiness,

Are close connected, and their sad Reverse

Is Vice, is Pain, is Infamy.—Alas !

These were the Lessons of thy private Life,

This I have told thee oft, but my fond Tongue

Runs o'er its former Precepts, and forgets

Thou now must mount a Throne ; a larger Scene

Of Duty opens.

ILYSSUS.

Yet the tender Friend,

Who should direct me, leaves me to myself.

Can'st thou abandon me ?

ALETES.

Would Fate permit

I would attend thee still. But oh, *Ilyssus*,

Whate'er becomes of me, when thou shalt reach

That envied Pinnacle of earthly Greatness,

Where

Where faithful Monitors but rarely follow,
 Ev'n there, amidst the kindest Smiles of Fortune,
 Forget not thou wert once distress'd and friendless.
 Be strictly just; but yet, like Heaven, with Mercy
 Temper thy Justice. From thy purged Ear
 Banish base Flattery, and spurn the Wretch
 Who would persuade thee thou art more than Man;
 Weak, erring, selfish Man, endued with Power
 To be the Minister of public Good.
 If Conquest charm thee, and the Pride of War
 Blaze on thy Sight, remember thou art placed
 The Guardian of Mankind, nor build thy Fame
 On Rapines, and on Murders. Should soft Peace
 Invite to Luxury, the pleasing Bane
 Of happy Kingdoms, know from thy Example
 The Bliss or Woe of nameless Millions springs,
 Their Virtue, or their Vice. Nor think by Laws
 To curb licentious Man; those Laws alone
 Can bend the headstrong Many to their Yoke,
 Which make it present Int'rest to obey them.
 O Boy! —

Enter PYTHIA, *hastily*.

PYTHIA.

Ilyssus! wherefore art thou here?

The King expects thee, and the Banquet waits.

ILYSSUS.

I cannot go.

ALETES.

Thou must; thy Fate depends

Upon thy Absence now. The Queen approaches.

After the Banquet I again will see thee,

And thou shalt know the whole. I will by Heaven.

[*Exit* Ilyssus.

I

Pythia

Pythia away, and wait me in the Temple.

[*Exit Pythia.*]

She saw them not; on her contracted Brow
Sits brooding Care. She speaks! My Heart beats thick,
And my Tongue trembles to perform its Office.
Now Fate attend, and perfect thine own Work!

Enter CREUSA.

CREUSA.

To what have I consented!—Ha! who art thou
That thus intrud'st on sacred Privacy,
When the o'erburthen'd Mind unloads its Griefs,
Its hoarded Miseries.

ALETES.

Thy better Genius!

CREUSA.

That Voice is sure familiar to my Ear!
Who art thou, speak.

ALETES.

One whom Adversity
Has taught to know himself. I bring thee tidings
Of an unhappy Man who wrong'd thee much,
But much repented of the Wrongs he did thee;
Of thy *Nicander*, Queen.

CREUSA.

Nicander, say'st thou?

O then thou art indeed my better Genius.

ALETES.

Now, arm thy Soul for Wonders yet to come!
Perhaps he lives.

CREUSA.

He lives? [*Looking on him with
Amazement.*]

A T R A G E D Y.

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ALBES. [*After great Irresolution and Struggles with himself.*

Behold him here ! [*She faints.*

—What has my Rashness done ?——The Blush of Life
Has left her Cheek, the Pulse forgets to move.

Where shall I turn ? I cannot call for Aid,
Nor can I leave her thus.——She breathes, she stirs !

—Yes, yes, *Creusa*, thy *Nicander* lives,
And he will catch at least this dear Embrace
Tho' now thou art another's.

CREUSA.

Gracious Gods !

It is, it is *Nicander*, 'tis my Lord !

O I am only thine, no Power on Earth
Shall e'er divide us more.

—It cannot be, my Senses all deceive me——

And yet it is.——O let me gaze upon thee,
Recall each Trace which marks thee for my own,
And gives me back the Image of my Heart.

How Time and Grief have chang'd thee ! But my Love
Can know no Change. My Lord, my Life, my Husband !
Where hast thou wander'd ? how hast thou been hid
From Love's all-piercing Sight ? the bloody Ruffians,
How didst thou 'scape their Rage ? or did they wreak
Upon the helpless Innocent alone
Their impious Vengeance ?

NICANDER.

Nor on me, nor him

Did Vengeance fall.

CREUSA.

Does he too live ?

NICANDER.

He does.

I 2

CREUSA.

CREUSA.

[*Aside.*]O honest *Phorbas* ! Murder now is Virtue.

NICANDER.

The fabled Murder was all Stratagem
 Contriv'd for thy dear sake ; no impious Ruffians
 Pursued our Steps, I found that I had wrong'd thee
 Beyond redress, nor knew another means
 But by my Death to save thee from Dishonor.
 Despair I thought might conquer Love, and thou
 Once more be *Athens*' Pride. The precious Charge
 Forbad a real Death, I therefore stain'd
 With Blood my well-known Garments, which produc'd —

CREUSA.

A curst'd Effect. — But I have nearer Fears.
 How cam'st thou hither ? wherefore to these Shades ?
 The Boy, where is he ?

NICANDER.

Far from hence —

CREUSA.

Thank Heaven !

NICANDER.

He lives in Peace and Safety. — What disturbs thee ?

CREUSA.

Nothing — I dare not tell him what I feared,
 His honest Breast might shudder at the Guilt,
 Tho' now it be more needful. — The dear Boy,
 Say, is he brave ?

NICANDER.

As Woman could desire.

CREUSA.

And form'd like thee ?

NICANDER.

His Person far exceeds

What

What my most vig'rous Youth could boast, *Creusa*.
And his firm Mind is Wisdom's aged Strength
With all Youth's Graces soften'd.

CREUSA.

'Tis too much.

O happy Mother ! Call'st thou him *Nicander* ?

NICANDER.

No, *Ion*, 'twas the Name the Matron chose,
Who gave him to my Care.

CREUSA.

Then *Ion* be it.

Ion shall reign in *Athens*. Know'st thou, Love,
The curs'd Design which this *Æolian* here,
And the vile Maid —

NICANDER.

The Priestess, it should seem,
With *Xuthus* has conspir'd to fix his Race
On *Athens*' Throne.

CREUSA.

But never shall his Race
That Scepter wield.

NICANDER.

It never shall, *Creusa*.

I have a Means —

CREUSA.

[*Aside*.

My Means, thank Heaven, is surer.

NICANDER.

But I will tell thee all from first to last.
Hear then and weigh my Words, for Fate is in them.
Xuthus, th' *Athenian* King —

CREUSA.

I think not of him.

NICANDER

NICANDER.

Beware of that. Whate'er thou think'st, *Creusa*,
Xuthus must still reign on, thy Lord and Husband.

CREUSA.

Xuthus my Lord! then what art thou, *Nicander*?
 Do'st thou despise me for a Crime thyself
 Hast forc'd me to commit? My Soul was thine
 Ev'n when I gave my Hand, and still remains
 Untainted, undefil'd.

NICANDER.

I know it well,

Thou dearest, best of Women.—My torn Heart
 Drops Blood while I propose it, yet we must,
 We must for ever part.——Forebear, *Creusa*,
 That killing Look strikes thro' me.—Think, O think,
 What in this Age of Absence I have borne,
 How combated each tender Thought, and liv'd
 For thy dear Sake a Victim to Despair.
 But now if thou consent'st, all, all is mine,
 And I forgive my Fate.—The dear, dear Boy,
 I have a Means to place him on the Throne
 Secure as we could wish.

CREUSA.

Secure he shall be,

I will proclaim him to the World as mine,
 And *Athens* shall with Joy receive its Sov'reign;
 The Tyrant *Xuthus* shall be taught to fear
 A Master's Frown.

NICANDER.

Thy Rashness, my *Creusa*,

May ruin all.

CREUSA.

I will be rash, if this

Be

Be Rashness, to declare to Earth, to Heav'n,
 A Mother's Heart-felt Joy, whose only-Child
 Snatch'd from the Grave unhop'd for comes to claim,
 With every Grace and every Virtue crown'd,
 Th' Imperial Seat of his great Ancestors.
 And shall we want a Means?

NICANDER.

We need not wait;

For by my Care th' important Means is found
 Already, and no human Power but thine
 Can hinder our Success. I would have hid
 The Secret from thee till thy wish'd Consent
 Had giv'n my Purpose Strength, but thou defeat'st
 My utmost Caution, and wilt force me tell thee,
Ilyffus is young *Ion*! — Ha! *Creusa*!
 Thou art not mad! Good Heaven! how her Eye fixes!
 What have I done? what said, which could attack
 The Seats of Sense with this amazing Force?
 My Wife, my Queen, O speak! —

CREUSA.

Off, touch me not,

Thou can'st not bring Relief. — O I am curs'd
 Beyond all Power of Aid. Thou too art curs'd
 And know'st it not. — He dies, he dies, *Nicander*!

NICANDER.

Amazement! who?

CREUSA.

O had he not been mine,

His Youth, his Softness, each attracting Grace —
 I should have staid whole Ages ere in Thought
 I had consented to so damn'd a Deed.
 Tears, Tears, why burst ye not? — But what have I
 To do with Tears? those are for tender Mothers.

The

The Tigress weeps not o'er her mangled Prey.—
He dies, he dies, *Nicander*.

NICANDER.

Who? *Ilyffus*?

Speak, speak, *Creusa*.

CREUSA.

Phorbas urg'd the Deed,
And I consented; at the Feast he dies
By Poison.—O my Soul!

NICANDER.

Fly then, this Instant
Perhaps thou may'st prevent it, as thou cam'st
He parted hence.—I knew not to his Death!

CREUSA:

I go, I fly.

NICANDER.

Yet stay, thy Rashness there,
If Fate has sav'd him, may undo us yet.
—The *Pythia*! true, the *Pythia* shall rush in
To stop the fatal Banquet, and declare
The Feast unhallow'd; at this lucky Moment
She waits me in the Temple.—Stay, *Creusa*.

[Exit *Nicander*.

CREUSA.

The *Pythia*, no; I will myself outstrip
The Lightning's Speed. Whatever be th' Event,
'Tis not too late to die.

[Exit.

The End of the Fourth ACT.

ACT



A C T V.

The Laurel Grove.

PHORBAS and LYCEA.

LYCEA.

O Earth! O Heaven! O wretched, wretched *Athens*!

PHORBAS.

Speak on, *Lycea*; wherefore art thou silent?
Why do'st thou lead me to this secret Shade?
What mean thy flowing Tears?

LYCEA.

The Queen, the Queen!

PHORBAS.

Say, what of her?

LYCEA.

I know not, all to me
Is Terror and Confusion.

PHORBAS.

What thou know'st

Relate.

LYCEA.

She sent me forth to seek thee, *Phorbas*;
I found thee not, but met at my Return
Creusa's self. Despair was in her Eyes,
With hasty Steps she flew impatient by me,
Not listen'd when I spake. I follow'd wand'ring,
And enter'd the Pavilion.

[Exit.]

K

PHORBAS

PHORBAS.

The Pavilion?

Why, went she to the Banquet?

LYCEA.

Eager went,

Despair and Anguish mixing on her Look.

But, O good Heaven, how chang'd was that Despair

To inexpressive Joy, when from the Croud

She learnt *Ilyssus* had delay'd the Feast,

And won the King once more to ask her Presence,

“Where is he? let me clasp him to my Breast,”

She cried; “I now no longer will resist

“Heaven's high command.” Imperial *Xuthus* rose

With Transport to receive her, and loud Shouts

Proclaim'd the People's Joy. When, Death to Sight!

Eternal Pain to Memory! the Slave

Presents the Goblets; Fill, she cried, a third,

I too will hail *Ilyssus* King of *Athens*.But first all swear, swear by immortal *Jove*,

By the far-darting God who here presides;

And the chaste Guardian of our native Fanes,

Swear here, swear all; and binding be the Oath,

Ilyssus only shall be *Athens'* King.

PHORBAS.

What could she mean?

LYCEA.

Attentive *Xuthus* caught

With Joy the happy Omen, and all swore

Ilyssus only should be *Athens'* King.This done, I saw her from *Ilyssus'* Hand

Snatch the dire Goblet; and to him resign

Her own untouch'd: The Slave who mix'd the Draught

Turn'd pale and trembled, I with eager Zeal

Press'd

A T R A G E D Y.

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Prefs'd forward, but in vain ; she firmly grasp'd
The Bowl, and smiling drank it to the Dregs.

PHORBAS.

The Poison, ha ?—I knew her foolish Fondness
Would start at Murder's Name. But wherefore die ?
Why turn upon herself her impious Rage ?
'Twas Madness all ; or else some new Contrivance,
Some fresh *Æolian* Fraud.—I care not what.
I yet will blast their Schemes.—Yes, let her die,
By her own Folly perish. *Athens* still
Survives, and shall survive.—I must be sudden.
She doubtless will betray me to the King,
And cut off ev'n this last Resource. *Lycea*,
Be secret, and thy Country shall be free.

LYCEA.

Were it not better, *Phorbas*, first to see her.
Perhaps some Secret unreveal'd may lurk
Beneath this Show of unexampled Rashness.
She left the Banquet soon, and with the *Pythia*
Enter'd the Temple.

PHORBAS.

With the *Pythia*, say'st thou ?
Then there is Mischief toward.

LYCEA.

Yet now alone

We may surprize her, for I saw the Maid
Quick from the Fane return with hasty Steps
As if dispatch'd on some important Message,
Perhaps to find thee out. Sure thou should'st see her.

PHORBAS.

And perish, ha ?—No, no, my sacred Country,
Too much already have I been deceiv'd ;
I will not leave thee in a Woman's Power.

K 2

—Yet

—Yet hold, *Lycea* may inform her of them
And my Designs prove yet abortive. Maid,
Thy Presence may be needful.

LYCEA.

Mine ? Good Heaven,
In what ? *Creusa* will require my Aid ;
At least my Tears are due to my poor Queen
In her last Moments.

PHORBAS.

Stay, she wants them not ;
I know the Poison's Force too well, *Lycea*,
To fear a Death so sudden. This Way, Maid ;
Nay, thou must go ; I shall have Business for thee,
Some secret Message to the Queen, *Lycea*,
Which thou alone can'st bear. [Exit.

Enter PYTHIA and NICANDER.

PYTHIA.

'Twas he, I saw him and *Lycea* with him.
Sure he should be inform'd ? — Thou hear'st me not.

NICANDER.

This Action of the Queen sits near my Heart.

PYTHIA.

She bade me tell thee.—But why waste we Time,
Thou now may'st enter at the Postern Gate
Unseen by all.

NICANDER.

Why did'st thou not rush in, and stop the Feast ?
Thy speedy Presence there had sav'd us all.

PYTHIA.

What could I do ? The Queen was there already
And all seem'd Peace and Joy ; could I suspect
That Poison lurk'd beneath so fair a seeming ?

NICANDER.

NICANDER.

She breaks thro' my Designs. — Unhappy Woman !
 My Soul bleeds for her, and Confusion hangs
 On every rising Thought. — The dear, dear Boy ! —
 Where is he, at the Banquet still ?

PYTHIA.

He is.

NICANDER.

And where *Crensa* ?

PYTHIA.

I already told thee,
 But thou regard'st not, in the Temple's Gloom
 Retir'd she sits, expecting thy Approach.
 We there may settle all.

NICANDER.

I fear her much.

Thou seest her Passions are too near concern'd
 To be of use to us ; thy cooler Sense
 Must here direct us. Does the Poison's Power
 Affect her yet ?

PYTHIA.

Not yet ; I would have tried
 Some powerful Antidote to quell its Force ;
 But she refuses Life, and only begs
 To see her Son and thee.

NICANDER.

I will attend

Upon the Instant. But first hear me, *Pythia* ;
 Thou seest on what a Precipice we stand,
 It were in vain to hope we could conceal
 The Truth from *Xuthus*, from the rest we may ;
 'Tis thy task therefore —

PYTHIA.

PYTHIAS.

What? to own the Fraud,
And publish to the King that *Delphi's* Shrine
Is not oracular. Ha!

NICANDER.

To the King

'Twere better sure to publish the Deceit
Than to the World; and where's the Means but this
To hide it? By *Creusa's* Art thou say'st
He is already bound in solemn Oaths
To leave *Ilyffus* Heir to *Athens'* Throne.
Can'st thou not add still stronger Oaths, or ere
Thou do'st reveal the Secret of our Fate?
Then who shall dare to break them? shall the King?
Thou know'st his scrup'lous Piety extends
Almost to Weakness. What should tempt him to it?
Creusa dead can frame no Schemes against him;
The Boy to him alone must owe his Greatness;
And for *Nicander*, never more shall *Greece*
Hear his forgotten Name.

PYTHIA.

It must be so;

And yet——

NICANDER.

What yet? to *Phorbas*, thou with ease
May'st own the Truth; he will not start at Fraud
In sacred things.—But see, the Queen approaches
Impatient of our Stay. She changes not!
The Bloom of Health is still upon her Cheek!
Fain would I hope—But Hopes, alas, are vain.—
What hast thou done, *Creusa*?

CREUSA *entering*:Sav'd *Ilyffus*!

NICANDER.

A . T R A G E D Y .

NICANDER.

Thou might'st have liv'd with Honor.

CREUSA.

Liv'd! good Heaven!

I start, I tremble at the Thoughts of Life.

Can'st thou reflect on what I had design'd,

On what I am, on what, alas, I have been,

And not perceive Death was my only Refuge?

—Am I not *Xuthus'* Wife, and what art thou?

O had'st thou seen the Torments of my Soul,

When in one hasty Moment it ran o'er

The Business of an Age, weigh'd all Events,

Saw *Xuthus*, Thee, *Ilyssus*, *Athens* bleed.

In one promiscuous Carnage!—Light at length

Burst thro' the Gloom, and Heaven's own Voice proclaim'd

One Victim might suffice.——

For *Xuthus* Honor strove, and mightier Love

Assum'd *Nicander's* Cause. Who then could fall?

Could *Xuthus*? could *Nicander*?—no; *Creusa*.

NICANDER.

Would thou had'st been less kind!—But, O my Queen,

To blame thee now were vain.——

CREUSA.

To blame? 'tis Praise,

'Tis Triumph I demand. He lives! he reigns!

Young *Ion* lives! young *Ion* reigns in *Athens*!

O bring him, *Pythia*, bring him to my Arms;

Let me but pour a last sad Blessing o'er him,

And Death has lost its Terrors.

How now, *Lycea*?

Enter LYCEA hastily.

LYCEA.

Mighty Queen, I know not

If thy Command would authorize th' Attempt,
 But *Phorbas* with an arm'd *Athenian* Band
 Now enters the Pavilion to destroy
 The King and young *Ilyffus*.

NICANDER.

Earth and Heaven!

What say'st thou, Maid?

CREUSA.

O let me fly to save him,

Here shall their Poinards——

NICANDER.

Rest thou there, *Creusa*,

Thy Embassies to-day have prov'd too fatal.

My Life for his I save him from the Stroke,

And on the Instant lend him to thy Arms.

Now, Fate, be doubly mine!

[Exit.

CREUSA.

Off, let me go, I will not be restrain'd.

They tear him piecemeal!

PYTHIA.

Patience, mighty Queen!

What Man can do *Nicander* will perform.

CREUSA.

He is a Father only to my Child,

He cannot tell them what a Mother feels.

—*Phorbas* was born the Curse of me and mine.

I might have known to what his impious Rage

Would urge him on, and should have first inform'd him.

—Gods! must I never know sweet Peace again,

Not even in Death have Rest!

PYTHIA.

Behold who comes

To bless thee ere thou diest, and cease to murmur

At Heaven's high Will.

Enter

A. T R A G E D Y:

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Enter ILYSSUS.

CREUSA.

It is, it is *Ilyssus* —

My Son, my Son!

ILYSSUS.

Good Heavens! and do I live

To see a Parent melt in Fondness o'er me!

— *Aletes* saved me from the Soldiers' Arms,

And bade me fly to find a Mother here.

Art thou indeed that Mother, mighty Queen!

And may I call thee so? Thou art, thy Looks

Thy Tears, thy kind Embrace, all, all proclaim

The Truth—O let me thus, thus on my Knees—

CREUSA.

Rise, rise, my Child; I am, I am thy Mother.

ILYSSUS.

O sacred Sound, *Ilyssus* is no more

That outcast Youth. A Mother, and a Queen

He finds at once.

CREUSA.

But art thou safe, my Child?

Hast thou no Wound?

ILYSSUS.

The old grey-headed Man,

Who brought this Morn the News of thy Arrival,

Had rais'd against my Breast his eager Sword,

Defenceless I; when good *Aletes* came

And snatch'd me from the Stroke. I would have staid,

Unarm'd with him have staid, but his Command

Was absolute, that I should fly to find,

What I have found, a Mother!

[*Embracing her.*]

Yet, O Queen,

Why am I thus encompass'd round with Wonder?

L

May

May I not know this Riddle of my Fate?
 Why first condemn'd to pass my Infant Days
 In this obscure Retreat? If I am thine,
 Thy Son, illustrious Queen, sure I was born
 To Thrones, and Empires?

CREUSA.

Thou art born to Thrones,
 And shalt in *Athens* reign.

ILYSSUS.

As *Xuthus*' Heir.

Is *Xuthus* then my Sire? Forgive me, Queen,
 I have a thousand, and a thousand Doubts.
 Can *Xuthus* be my Sire?

PYTHIA.

Forbear, *Ilyssus*,
 Nor press thy Fate too far, When Time permits
 Thou shalt know all.

CREUSA.

Shalt know it now, *Ilyssus*.
 Not *Xuthus* is thy Sire, but that brave Man
 Who but this Infant snatch'd thee from thy Fate,
 And by that Act proclaim'd himself a Father.

ILYSSUS.

Aletes?

CREUSA.

Not *Aletes*, but *Nicander*,
 My wedded Lord, thy Sire!—And see, he comes
 To bless thee, and confirm the sacred Truth.
 —Good Heaven, he bleeds!

Enter NICANDER.

NICANDER.

To Death, to Death, *Creusa*.
 Amid the Fray I met the Fate I fought for.

All else is safe, and *Xuthus* now pursues
 A scatter'd Few, who fall beneath his Sword.
 —Where is my Boy?—Ye Guards of Innocence!
 How has he been beset, and how escap'd!
 —Where is my Boy, for I may own him now,
 And clasp him to my Breast, no more *Aletes*,
 The sage Instructor of a Youth unknown,
 But the dear Father weeping o'er his Child,

ILYSSUS.

O Sir, what Gratitude before inspir'd
 Let Duty pay,

NICANDER.

I have no Time to waste
 In Fondness now. Hear my last Words, *Ilyssus*,
 And bind them to thy heart, Thou still must live
 The Son of *Xuthus*. The good *Pythia* here
 Will tell thee all the Story of thy Fate:
 And may'st thou prosper as thou do'st obey
 Her sacred Counsel. *Xuthus* too must know
 The fatal Tale; but to the World beside
 It must be hid in Darkness.

PYTHIA.

Phorbas sure

Should be inform'd.

NICANDER.

Phorbas has breath'd his last;
 And the brib'd Slave who mix'd the poisonous Draughts
 Fell by this Hand.—*Ilyssus*, O farewell.
 I will not bid Adieu to thee, *Creusa*,
 Thy Colour changes, and the Lamp of Life
 Fades in thy Eye; we soon shall meet again.—
Ilyssus, Oh!—

L 2

ILYSSUS.

ILYSSUS.

How hard he grasps my Hand!

My Lord, my Father! Have I learn'd so late,
 To call thee by that Name, and must I lose,
 For ever lose? — Good Heaven, she grasps me too!
 What means it, *Pythia*? the cold Damps of Death
 Are on her.

CREUSA.

O my Child, enquire no farther;

'Tis fitting we should part. *Lycea, Pythia*,
 Intreat of *Xuthus*—yet I need not fear
 His Goodness, tho' I wrong'd him, foully wrong'd him,
 He yet will prove a Father to my Child,
 And from the World conceal the fatal Truth.
 O I am cold——what Bolts of Ice shoot thro' me!
 How my Limbs shiver!—Nearer yet, my Child,
 My Sight grows dim, and I could wish to gaze
 For ever on thee.—Oh, it will not be—
 Ev'n thou art lost, *Ilyssus*.—Oh—Farewel.

[Dies.

ILYSSUS.

She dies, she dies. Was I then only mock'd
 With a vain Dream of Bliss to be plung'd back
 In deeper Misery? Did I but hear
 The tender Name of Child breath'd fondly o'er me
 To make me feel what 'tis to lose that Name?
 O I am ten times more an Orphan now,
 Than when I knew no Parents.

Enter XUTHUS, &c.

XUTHUS.

Where is this Murd'ress, who with vile Deceit
 Seem'd to consent to ours, and Heaven's Designs,
 Only to make us a more easy Prey
 To her Assassins?—Ha, *Creusa* dead?

And

A TRAGEDY.

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And the brave Stranger who preserv'd us all?

Is he too dead?—The Boy—

PYTHIA.

Ilyssus lives.

And thou hast sworn, great King, that he shall reign
Supreme in *Athens*. Say, do'st thou confirm
That Oath?

XUTHUS.

I do, by Heaven!

PYTHIA.

Alk here no more.

The fatal Tale is for thy private Ear.
Retire, and learn it all. For poor *Cruusa*,
She wrong'd not thee, upon herself alone
She drew Heaven's Vengeance. And too surely proves
That Murder but intentional, not wrought
To horrid Act, before th' eternal Throne
Stands forth the first of Crimes. Who dare assume,
Unwarranted, Heaven's high Prerogative
O'er Life and Death, with double Force shall find
Turn'd on themselves the Mischiefs they design'd.

The End of the Fifth ACT.



EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Miss HAUGHTON, who acted
the PYTHAI.

A length I'm freed from Tragical Parade,
No more a Pythian Priestess, — tho' a Maid;
At once resigning, with my sacred Dwelling,
My Wreaths, my Wand, my Arts of Fortune-telling.

Yet superstitious Folks, no doubt, are here,
Who still regard me with a kind of Fear,
Lest to their secret Thoughts these prying Eyes
Should boldly pass, and take them by Surprise.
Nay, tho' I disavow the whole Deceit,
And fairly own my Science all a Cheat,
Should I declare, in spite of Ears and Eyes,
The Beaus were handsome, or the Critics wise,
They'd all believe it, and with dear Delight
Say to themselves at least,
"The Girl has Taste;" "the Woman's in the right."

Or, should I tell the Ladies, so dispos'd,
They'd get good Matches, ere the Season clos'd,
They'd smile, perhaps, with seeming Discontent,
And, sneering, wonder what the Creature meant;
But whisper to their Friends, with beating Heart,
"Suppose there should be something in her Art"
Grave Statesmen too would chuckle, should I say,
On such a Motion, and by such a Day,
They would be summon'd from their own Affairs
To tend the Nation's more important Cares;
"Well, if I must — howe'er I dread the Load,
"I'll undergo it — for my Country's Good.

All Men are Babbles, in a skilful Hand,
The ruling Passion is the Conjuror's Wand.
Whether we praise, foretell, persuade, advise,
'Tis that alone confirms us Fools or Wise.
The Devil without may spread the tempting Sin,
But the sure Conqueror is — the Devil within.

A S E C O N D E P I L O G U E.

Spoken by Mrs. PRITCHARD.

STAY, Ladies—Tho' I am almost tir'd to Death
With this long Part—and am so out of Breath—
Yet such a lucky Thought kind Heaven has sent,
That if I die for't, I must give it Vent.

The Men you know are gone. And now, suppose,
Before our Lords and Masters are rechose,
We take th' Advantage of an empty Town,
And chuse a House of Commons of our own.
What think ye, cannot we make Laws?—and then
Cannot we too unmake them, like the Men?
O place us once in good St. Stephen's Pews,
We'll shew them Women have their public Use.
Imprimis they shall marry; not a Man.
Past twenty-five, but what shall wear the Chain.
Next, we'll in earnest set about Reclaiming,
For, by my Life and Soul, we'll put down Gaming.
We'll spoil their deep destructive Midnight Play;
The Laws we make, we'll force them to obey;
Unless we let them, when their Spirits flag,
Piddle with us, ye know, at Quinze and Brag.
"I hope, my Dearest," says some well-bred Spouse,
"When such a Bill shall come before your House,
"That you'll consider Men are Men—at least
"That you'll not Speak, my Dear."—Not speak?—The Beast!
What, would you wound my Honour?—Wrongs like these—
For this, Sir, I shall bring you on your Knees.
—Or, if we're quite good-natur'd, tell the Man
We'll do him all the Service that we can.

Then for ourselves, what Projects, what Designs?
We'll tax, and double tax their nasty Wines;
But Duty-free import our Blonds and Laces, [Faces.
French Hoops, French Silks, French Cambricks, and—French

In short, my Scheme is not complicated quite,
But I may tell ye more another Night.
So come again, come all, and let us raise
Such glorious Trophies to our Country's Praise,
That all true Britons shall with one Consent
Cry out, "Long live the Female Parliament!"

T H E E N D.

